

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS:

Entry of the above amendments, and reconsideration and further examination of this application as amended is respectfully requested. Please cancel claims 5, 6, 17, 18, 36, 37, 48, 59, and 60 without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter contained therein. Claims 1-4, 7-16, 19-35, 38, 45-47, 49-58, and 61 remain in the application.

The amendments submitted above to certain claims have been done so either in response to the Examiner's rejections or objections or to correct claim dependency, to correct antecedent basis, to put the claim in conventional form, to correct punctuation, improper word usage, and the like. Specifically, claims 7, 19, and 49 were amended to correct claim dependency due to a canceled claim. Claims 29, 30, and 34 were amended to correct the antecedent basis for the renumbered steps. No new matter has been introduced through any of these amendments.

A. Allowable Subject Matter

The Examiner has allowed claims 50-54.

The Examiner has objected to claims 6, 7, 18, 19, 37, 38, 48, 49, 60, and 61 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

In response, Applicant has rewritten independent claim 1 to include all of the limitations of claim 6 and intervening claim 5, and has cancelled claims 5 and 6. Applicant submits that amended independent claim 1 is now in allowable form, and the Examiner's early indication to this effect is, therefore, courteously solicited. Claims 2-4 and 7-13 depend directly or indirectly from independent claim 1 and include all the elements and limitations thereof. As a result, and in light of the foregoing remarks concerning independent claim 1, Applicant likewise believes that claims 2-4 and 7-13 are also in allowable form, and the Examiner's early indication to this effect is also solicited.

Applicant has also rewritten independent claim 14 to include all of the limitations of claim 18 and intervening claim 17, and has cancelled claims 17 and 18. Applicant submits that amended independent claim 14 is now in allowable form, and the Examiner's early indication to this effect is, therefore, courteously solicited. Claims 15, 16, and 19-25 depend directly or

indirectly from independent claim 14 and include all the elements and limitations thereof. As a result, and in light of the foregoing remarks concerning independent claim 14, Applicant likewise believes that claims 15, 16, and 19-25 are also in allowable form, and the Examiner's early indication to this effect is also solicited.

Applicant has also rewritten independent claim 26 to include all of the limitations of claim 37 and intervening claim 36, and has cancelled claims 36 and 37. Applicant submits that amended independent claim 26 is now in allowable form, and the Examiner's early indication to this effect is, therefore, courteously solicited. Claims 27-35 and 38 depend directly or indirectly from independent claim 26 and include all the elements and limitations thereof. As a result, and in light of the foregoing remarks concerning independent claim 26, Applicant likewise believes that claims 27-35 and 38 are also in allowable form, and the Examiner's early indication to this effect is also solicited.

Applicant has also rewritten independent claim 45 to include all of the limitations of claim 48, and has cancelled claim 48. Due to the structure of this claim set, it was not necessary to include the elements of intervening claim 46. Applicant submits that amended independent claim 45 is now in allowable form, and the Examiner's early indication to this effect is, therefore, courteously solicited. Claims 46, 47, and 49 depend directly or indirectly from independent claim 45 and include all the elements and limitations thereof. As a result, and in light of the foregoing remarks concerning independent claim 45, Applicant likewise believes that claims 46, 47, and 49 are also in allowable form, and the Examiner's early indication to this effect is also solicited.

Applicant has rewritten independent claim 55 to include all of the limitations of claim 60 and intervening claim 59, and has cancelled claims 59 and 60. Applicant submits that amended independent claim 55 is now in allowable form, and the Examiner's early indication to this effect is, therefore, courteously solicited. Claims 56-58 and 61 depend directly or indirectly from independent claim 55 and include all the elements and limitations thereof. As a result, and in light of the foregoing remarks concerning independent claim 55, Applicant likewise believes that claims 56-58 and 61 are also in allowable form, and the Examiner's early indication to this effect is also solicited.

**B. Rejection of Claims
Under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)**

1. The Examiner has rejected claims 1-4, 13-16 and 25 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by JP-10-165,777.

In response, Applicant has amended independent claims 1 and 14 as discussed above in Section A to overcome anticipation by JP-10-165,777. Claims 2-4, 13, 15, 16 and 25, depend directly or indirectly from independent claims 1 and 14 and include all the elements and limitations thereof. As a result, and in light of the foregoing remarks concerning independent claims 1 and 14, Applicant likewise believes that claims 2-4, 13, 15, 16 and 25 also overcome the Examiner's rejection based on JP-10-165,777 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b), and withdrawal of that rejection in respect to these claims is respectfully requested.

2. The Examiner has rejected claims 12, 24, 26-30, 34, and 35 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by, or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as obvious over JP-10-165,777.

In response, Applicant has amended independent claims 1, 14, and 26 as discussed above in Section A to overcome anticipation and obviousness by JP-10-165,777. Claims 12, 24, 27-30, 34, and 35, depend directly or indirectly from independent claims 1, 14, and 26 and include all the elements and limitations thereof. As a result, and in light of the foregoing remarks concerning independent claims 1, 14, and 26, Applicant likewise believes that claims 12, 24, 27-30, 34, and 35 also overcome the Examiner's rejection based on JP-10-165,777 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b), or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as obvious, and withdrawal of that rejection in respect to these claims is respectfully requested.

**C. Rejection of Claims
Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)**

1. The Examiner has rejected claims 8-11, 20-23, 31-33, and 55-58 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over JP-10-165,777 in view of Lacy et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,280,619.

In response, Applicant has amended independent claims 1, 14, 26, and 55 as discussed above in Section A to overcome obviousness by JP-10-165,777 in view of Lacy et al. Claims 8-11, 20-23, 31-33, and 56-58 depend directly or indirectly from independent claims 1, 14, 26, and 55 and include all the elements and limitations thereof. As a result, and in light of the foregoing

remarks concerning independent claims 1, 14, 26, and 55, Applicant likewise believes that claims 8-11, 20-23, 31-33, and 56-58 also overcome the Examiner's rejection based on JP-10-165,777 in view of Lacy et al. under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as obvious, and withdrawal of that rejection in respect to these claims is respectfully requested.

2. The Examiner has rejected claims 5, 17, 36, and 45-47 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over JP-10-165,777 in view of Elgas et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,922,202.

In response, Applicant has amended independent claims 1, 14, 26, and 45 as discussed above in Section A to overcome obviousness by JP-10-165,777 in view of Elgas et al. Claims 5, 17, 36, and 46-47 depend directly or indirectly from independent claims 1, 14, 26, and 45 and include all the elements and limitations thereof. As a result, and in light of the foregoing remarks concerning independent claims 1, 14, 26, and 45, Applicant likewise believes that claims 5, 17, 36, and 46-47 also overcome the Examiner's rejection based on JP-10-165,777 in view of Elgas et al. under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as obvious, and withdrawal of that rejection in respect to these claims is respectfully requested.

3. The Examiner has rejected claim 59 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over JP-10-165,777 in view of Lacy et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,280,619, and further in view of Elgas et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,922,202.

In response, Applicant has amended independent claim 55 as discussed above in Section A to overcome obviousness by JP-10-165,777 in view of Lacy et al. and further in view of Elgas et al. Claim 59 depends directly or indirectly from independent claim 55 and includes all the elements and limitations thereof. As a result, and in light of the foregoing remarks concerning independent claims 55, Applicant likewise believes that claim 59 also overcomes the Examiner's rejection based on JP-10-165,777 in view of Lacy et al. and further in view of Elgas et al. under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as obvious, and withdrawal of that rejection in respect to these claims is respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION:

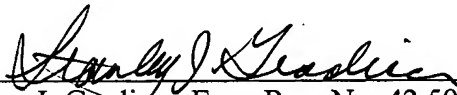
A bona-fide attempt has been made to place this application in condition for allowance. Each of the Examiner's bases for objection and rejection have been addressed and the claims have been amended, canceled, or arguments presented to overcome such rejections. The application is now believed to meet all statutory requirements and is thus believed to be in condition for allowance. The Examiner's early indication to that effect is, therefore, courteously solicited.

If a telephone conference would expedite allowance or resolve any additional questions, such a call is invited at the Examiner's convenience.

Applicant does not believe that any fees are due with this response. If this is not the case, please charge any required fees due, or credit any overpayment to, deposit account 50-0792.

Respectfully submitted,

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